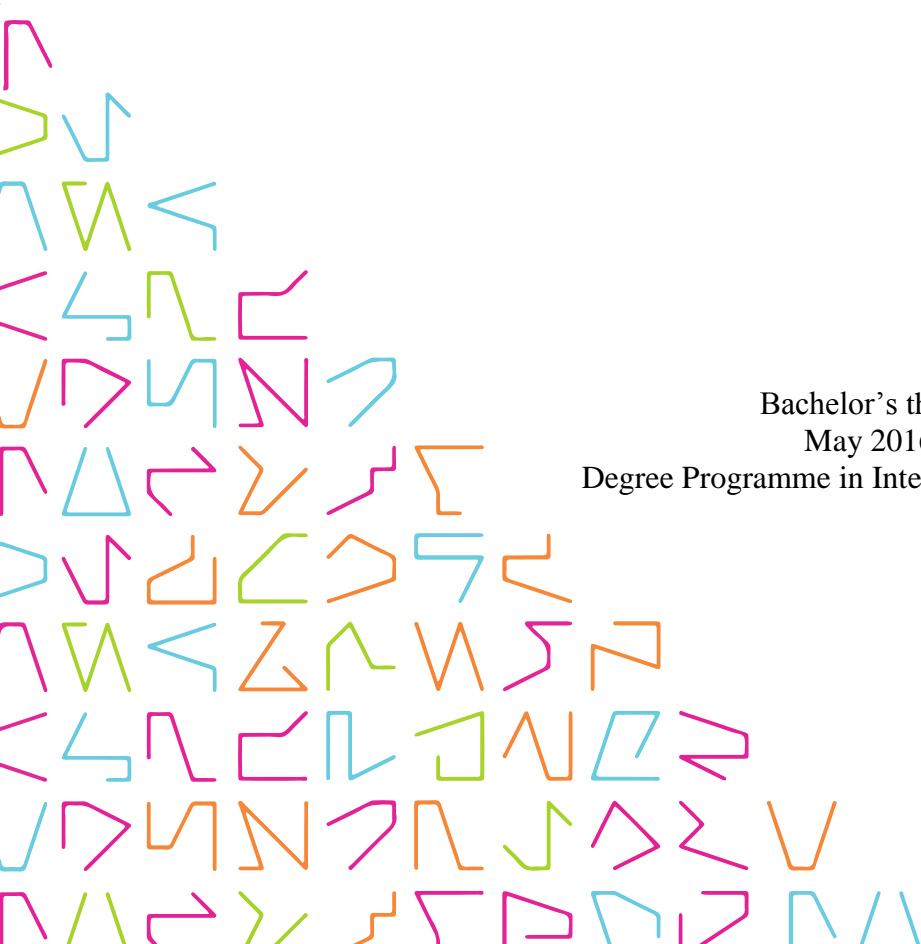


Background Research for the “Travel Destination of Tomorrow” – Specialization Program

Ida Manner

Bachelor's thesis
May 2016
Degree Programme in International Business



ABSTRACT

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Background Research for the “Travel Destination of Tomorrow” – Specialization Program

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The uttermost purpose of the bachelor's thesis was to conduct a background research for the “Travel Destination of Tomorrow” specialization program in order to grasp the customer needs and expectations rising when assessing the future prospects of the tourism and travel services industry through a viral survey. The goal was set on revealing what are the customers' educational needs and how these needs can be met through the specialization program to give them further preparedness to encounter the opportunities and challenges the future poses. By survey participation the respondents are given the chance to have an influence in deciding the final contents of the study program which can be altered to meet the customer needs and expectations expressed through the survey responses.

The “Travel Destination of Tomorrow” is a specialization program targeting tourism and travel industry entrepreneurs. The program is carried out as a complementing entity for previous studies in co-operation with 11 Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences providing study programs in tourism-related services management and administration. Sample for the survey was chosen in accordance with the commissioner's guidelines reaching out for entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa region who ideally already have an existing degree. By assessing the personal importance and giving value to the planned study themes such as productizing and future anticipation, the respondents were able to contribute to the program refinement and comment the existing composition of themes.

The data collection process was conducted through an online survey sent to the chosen sample respondents via an e-mail link. The collected data was analyzed and visualized in graphics to demonstrate the trends funneled from the survey responses. Concluding the data findings, the recommendations for study contents comprising can be made to meet the customer needs and expectations as extensively as possible. The survey participants were also provided with an opportunity to take part in an informational function held to promote the specialization program, scheduled for April 2016. Lead from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected, the program themes were valued as highly important to the entrepreneurs and a prominent interest in the study program contemplation can be detected in the light of the sample coverage and diversity.

Key words: customer survey, needs analysis, marketing research, consumer expectations

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the bachelor's thesis presented, a background research is conducted for the new “Tourism destination of tomorrow” - specialization program studies aimed for travel and tourism entrepreneurs as a complementing entity for already existing degree provided by 11 Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. The purpose of the thesis is to find out more about the current educational situation within these businesses, what the entrepreneurs’ thoughts might be regarding the future of the industry and whether they have been prepared for the changes it might bring to the business structure and the demand of the services provided. Ultimately, the most important aspect of the thesis is shedding light to the customers’ hopes and needs regarding the contents of the planned studies and how the subject matters can be tailored to meet the customer expectations. As a result of this, it will be possible to connect the findings and needs arising to meet with the planned study contents of the program.

As the thesis proceeds, the theoretical background including the customer needs analysis and survey based research methods will be introduced. The chosen method of data collection will be a survey. The survey is distributed to local travel and tourism entrepreneurs collecting information about their current position in the organization as well as thoughts and attitudes towards future industry changes, while in most parts the concentration will be on finding out their expectations and needs for the planned study program. Moreover, the eventual willingness for participation in an informational function regarding the program will be inquired. Also the possible economical as well as other barriers for interest in participation will be inquired and should there be any suggestions to complement the planned educational contents.

The completed surveys are gathered and the data analysis is conducted pinpointing the main trends occurring in the data received. The summarized results of the survey completed will give a solid ground for the forthcoming conclusions and further discussion from the marketing point of view. From the results analysed it will possible to make justified recommendations for the program planners and leaders in order for them to be able to include the themes the customers have brought up in the survey as part of the contemplation of the study program and to direct their resources accordingly towards the right target consumer group.

2 RESEARCH PLAN

2.1 Research topic

”The travel destination of tomorrow” is a tourism, hospitality and economy management association’s (MARATA) development project which will be implemented in cooperation with 11 Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences as a specialization program adjusted for travel tourism industry participants who cater their services to meet with the various needs occurring along with the flow of tourism. Directed as a complementing study ensemble to travel and tourism entrepreneurs with existing degree, the program duration is one year and it is worth of 30 credits. Central themes for the program are international relationships, tourism digitalization, future anticipation, earning logic, as well as experience productizing, marketing and value creating.

The topic of the thesis is a background research conducted through a survey method, providing the specialization study program leaders with vital information to structure the study contents and to support their marketing decisions. The topic is professionally interesting and strongly related to the current changes which the travel and tourism industry in Finland is facing when looking ahead to the years to come.

Themes of the thesis are topical since many entrepreneurs in travel and tourism industry require more knowledge and education in order to increase the preparedness to withstand and accommodate the challenges as well as increase their business potential made possible by industry changes. The development in technology and use of e-services in the daily functions of travel companies requires strengthened it-skills and understanding of the nature of the new services provided through virtual platforms.

2.2 Objectives and purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to generate knowledge through needs analysis to support the specialization program contents planning. The planned education program is directed to the industry entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa region. The purpose is to clarify the current educational needs of the tourism industry players and to determine whether there are any economical hindrances standing in the way of participation in the study program. With the information gained from the survey data, the business-to-consumer marketing strategy

can be neatened. The survey will reveal the needs and expectations of the travel and tourism entrepreneurs that are recognized and taken into consideration when designing the final study structure. Before starting the data collection process, the survey type will be determined and research objectives clearly defined. After establishing the innermost goals and the core purpose why the survey needs to be conducted, the actual research follows.

A survey will be sent to travel and tourism entrepreneurs resolving whether an interest in participation in the study program implementation exists and on which terms it would be possible. The objective for the thesis conducted is to provide the commissioner with valuable information gathered from the survey respondents to reveal their specified needs and expectations for the educational program. On the basis of the data received and analyzed the commissioner will be able to make amendments to the study contents to pair it well with the customers' needs and as a result of this, an increase in the participation rate through rightly adjusted marketing techniques is likely. As a result from the survey, conclusions can be drawn to indicate in which areas the survey part-takers wish to improve their businesses and where the knowledge of the industry as a whole lies when it comes to forecasting the changes in the future and capacity for timely reacting. These visions can be used as guidelines when refining the existing contents structure for the study program.

2.3 Concepts and theory

Marketing research is an essential part of the theoretical frame of the thesis and on the base of the concept it will easier to understand the linkage between the process itself and the importance of the drawn conclusions. The marketing research provides relevant data used to help solve marketing challenges that businesses face. A marketing research is a process of gathering, analysing and interpreting information about a market and a certain product or service which is to be offered for sale. Marketing analysis will also include information about the past and present at the same time specifying potential customers for the product or service. The research will dig deeper into the customer characteristics, spending habits, location, and the industry as a whole in the named market area.

First of all marketing researchers need to determine what they want to measure and how they will do it, which in most cases is the hardest part of the process itself. Data collection

and administering the survey is easy but knowing exactly what you want to know and finding a way to get that information from the respondents can be difficult. When the researcher and the commissioner have come to terms with the objectives and goals for the research it is time to decide which data collection methods or procedures will be used. Next step is to develop the data collection material, which in this case will be the electronically sent survey, and decide the size of the sample and how these people will be chosen. (Hunt, 2010, 42-44.)

An effective and timely research is an essential tool for crafting strategy in a marketplace that is going through rapid global changes. Marketing research can help in positioning new products in a correct way and give guidance in the pricing techniques. The global changes make it important for entrepreneurs understand what consumers are thinking and how their values are going through changes as well. The research allows marketing professionals to understand each country's values from the consumers' perspective. This is important when trying to market products and services for growing foreign market, which is the case for many of the entrepreneurs contacted in the thesis process. (Craig & Douglas, 2005, 2-3.)

2.4 Working methods and data

An online survey is the most convenient way to get in contact with the respondents chosen for the thesis research. Virally sent survey will reach a greater number of people and give them the freedom to submit their answers when they find the time for it. Expenses for an online survey are low or non-existent to the author of the thesis and less time will be consumed when comparing to surveys conducted as face-to-face interviews.

In the planning stage of the survey it's crucially important to note the importance of formatting the survey questions in a way, which they will generate only the needed information. The theory studied will support the questions and give them validation. The thesis project will start with the theoretical base which will give the support to the initially designed survey. The primary data used for the thesis will be inquired from the respondents through a survey. When formatted and polished, the survey will be distributed to the local tourism entrepreneurs. After collecting back the surveys from the respondents the result analyzing process can start which will eventually lead to making conclusions. After this it is possible to provide the commissioner with information of the

customer needs that should be taken into consideration when planning the structure for the study contents and make suggestions regarding where they should direct their marketing resources based on the data gathered during the research process.

The two basic approaches in business research used for the thesis are qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative data are expressed in numbers and most commonly presented in frequency tables. (Varkevisser, Pathmanathan & Brownlee 2003, 6.) Whereas the qualitative data can be obtained through un-pre-categorized open-ended questions and loosely structured interviews where the major difference to the approach listed above is that data is usually analyzed in words rather than numbers. (Varkevisser, Pathmanathan & Brownlee, 2003, 7.) According to Auerbach & Silverstein qualitative research is a research involving analyzing and interpreting material in order to discover meaningful patterns descriptive of a particular phenomenon. (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, 4.)

Quantitative approach on the other hand is used dominantly when the sample size is large contrasting situations where the group of people examined is not numerous and qualitative method has the potential of gaining more accurate individual data and the research can be conducted through smaller focus group studies. Usually the best and most broadly researched result that includes various point of views can be reached by making use of both methods, which will be the case in the thesis research at hand, where the author is able to gain the most fined down and accurate answers by completing the quantitative questions with qualitative ones and vice versa.

N.K Jha is introducing the theory of qualitative-quantitative continuum in business research which is scientifically strengthened by its self-correcting loops. The continuum can be explained as continuous circle between the two methods that can access the information to complete each other. It can be applied to every research and when it is conceptualized for use, the research is no longer strictly either quantitative or qualitative but it mixes both approaches that support each other as a combination of study foundations. (Jha, 2008, 42-43.) For the survey that is designed to collect data from the respondents both approaches will be used to complete the informational resources gained from the methods as a continuum. Respondents will be given opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions through loose-formatted questions making room for personal views but when precision and accuracy in measurement and statistics is needed, quantitative

scales will step in. This approach will make use of the continuum theory whereas in most parts the survey will include quantitative questions that can be complemented through qualitative questions this bringing either more focus or depth to the question asked.

The purpose of the data analysis and interpretation phase is to transform the collected, organized and displayed data into credible evidence in the form of a table, bar chart, line graph, or other representation. The theoretical base must also be included in the result analyzing process. Theory is linked to the analysis in order to ensure that the analyzing methods are efficient and generating the needed information. The theory will give guidelines how to proceed through the analyzing process all the way into making solid conclusion from the data received. For the case, theoretical background will be used to proceed from the data findings to making solid and justified conclusions.

2.5 Thesis process

A very typical starting point for a research is the problem definition, claims Wright and Crimp. By defining the problems the organization is able to map its current activities and whether there is something to either achieve or solve. The problem definition does not always need to be an external threat analysis targeting to resolve issues arising outside of the business, it can be an attempt to solve an issue, a conflict or trying to find a way of adapting to a change occurring within the business. In the thesis at hand the main reason the commissioner wishes to carry out a research is the desire of diversifying into new products, the product being a specialization study program directed to tourism and travel industry entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa region. After problem definition the research process will be specified with setting the objectives to give the research a purpose. In this case, the research objective is to establish opportunities of new brand in the specific product field by surveying the potential customers' current educational needs and expectations towards the program. (Wright & Crimp, 2000, 4-8.)

After problem definition and establishing the objective it is time to proceed to data search by specifying the requirements for information to be gathered. This stage also includes exploring the resources available and whether previous studies from the same topic have been conducted. The data search includes the theoretical background of the thesis that makes use of the primary and secondary data sources. The theoretical backbone is used to determine the best alternative of data collection methods to proceed to the actual

research. The most logical and preferred data collection method used for customer needs mapping research is a survey, which can be virally designed and then sent to the respondents via e-mail.

According to Sachdeva the research methodology is the underlying theory of how the research should proceed. (Sachdeva, 2009 1-4.) Methodology is used to explain in detail how the thesis will be conducted. The innermost purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the use of scientific methods and the use of methodology will clarify what types of experiments the author will run and how all of it will be done to uncover these answers. (Kothari, 2004, 14.) The process includes the kinds of data collected simultaneously answering the questions; how will the data be collected, from who it will be collected and how will it be analyzed afterwards?

The theoretical background used to support the thesis and to give structural guideline will include business methodology concepts such as target market research, customer needs analysis and survey as an initial method of research. These methods have been chosen based on the nature of the thesis topic. Since the main purpose is to provide the commissioner with the expressed needs and expectations customers have concerning the planned specialization program, it's important to study the market and apply the theory of customer needs analysis that will also give aid in formatting the survey questions for data collection purposes.

The thesis writing process includes various stages. Firstly, the research theory and methodology has to be studied to give the thesis a solid foundation. Based on the theoretical background the survey is built to a standard where it can be distributed to the sample population. After the survey has been designed, launched and the completed surveys have been collected back, the process of data analyzing can start. The goal of the data analysis is to create information from the completed surveys in order to have the final research outcomes interpreted and visualized with overall presentation of important figures, tables and graphs. (Sachdeva, 2009, 77.) Finally the conclusion wrapping up the research process can be made in accordance with the results derived from the analyzed survey data.

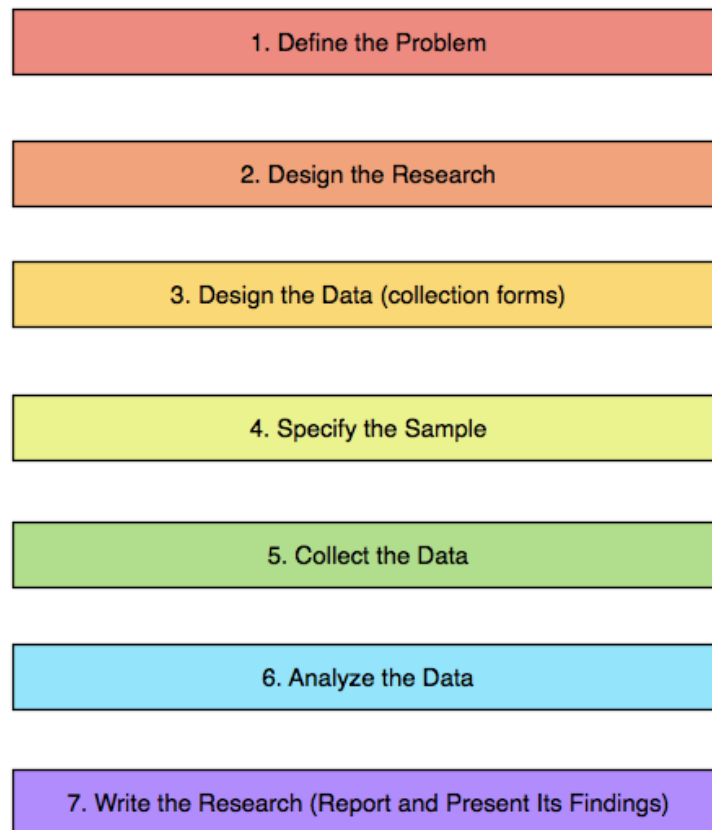


FIGURE 1. Research stages.

(Image sources: img.buddy.com)

Researcher should know the background and significance of the research problem including the current state of knowledge and potential contribution of the research for the field studied. (Jha, 2008, 5.) The commissioner's responsibility is to forward their expectations of the research outcome to the thesis author and to hand out the existing information of the research topic. After establishing the research plan, defining purpose of the research and the main research questions, the actual groundwork and theoretical study can take place. The main research question in the thesis at hand can be narrowed down to finding out the customers' expectations towards the planned specialization program. Through the survey questions the researcher and the author of the thesis is able to grasp these expectations and interpret them into a solid data that illustrates the findings for the commissioner. The findings can then be adjusted to the study program, to meet with the customer needs and expectations allowing the commissioner to direct their marketing resources accordingly.

Survey sample is the group of people chosen as respondents for the survey. Since the aim of the thesis is to find out the expectation of travel and tourism industry entrepreneurs, the sample will be chosen among regional employers of tourism-related services and for example using the Vihreä Sydän Oy collaborates database as a source of contacts. The aim for the sample is to reach out for both men and women from various age groups. A division between the sample size in different factors such as gender, age or ethnicity will not be made since the most important aspect as well as the only limitation for the survey is that the respondents are currently employed by the domestic or international travel and tourism industry.

When choosing the sample it must be taken into consideration that the specialization program is targeted to population involved in tourism business simultaneously holding an existing study degree. Geographical limitations for the sampling also exist since the respondents taking part in survey must have their business operating in Pirkanmaa, Finland. The research design is determined, which also includes the thesis author's intentions to process the gathered data, interpret the result and finally make conclusion based on the research findings. In order to ensure the success of the research project a link between the results the project will deliver and the benefits the information will pass on to the commissioner must exist. (Melton, 2008, 40.)

Sampling is the selection of representative sample from the total population which through the data collection will present it as a whole. Therefore it's crucially important that the sample is truly representative of population characteristics without bias so that the resulting conclusions are reliable and valid. (Kothari, 2004, 152.) A major issue that motivates sampling in the first place is generalization according to Sachdeva. (2009, 141.) In most cases the researcher is interested in more people than just the chosen sample which take part directly in the survey. Since the sample is there to represent the total population, generalizations deriving from the research findings can be made for example psychologists to develop theories that will hold for the population as a whole.

Generalization in sample data collection analysis is not always ethical due to various reasons. However, ethical issues will not be a barrier in the sampling or the following data analyzing process for the thesis at hand because of the topic, which is relatively vague and does not include personal data that could harm individuals and would have to be carefully processed in secrecy. The generalization can be used in the case at hand when

reaching out for potential customers outside the sample. In the end of the research process, if proven valid, the results of the data analysis will potentially be applied to larger population outside the chosen sample that has represented them and therefore the marketing decisions as well as final touches to the specialization program can be made on the basis of the information the research generates.

The next step in the research process is the acquirement of data. The data sources for research are compelled from primary and secondary data. The primary data used for the thesis will be the initial material acquired during the research process, in this case the data gathered from the survey respondents. The secondary data will consist of edited second-hand sources that represent someone else's thinking but remain relevant to the research topic. (Sachdeva, 2009, 109.) The secondary data analysis is simply a process of analyzing the researcher's observations and pre-existing data in a new way that decreases the credibility issues.

After collection, the data has to be processed and analyzed in accordance with the outline laid down during the research plan development, claims Kothari. (122, 2004.) The first and very important stage in analyzing the raw data especially when the data collection method has been a survey is called editing. This is a careful scrutiny of the material conducted to detect errors and correct them if possible. Coding is a technique used in assigning numbers or other symbols to answers so they can be classified, this approach is proven to be particularly helpful when analyzing quantitative data.

In cases where the research data is chunky the large volume of raw data can be chopped down in named and homogenous groups, this taking place, the approach is called classification. When the data is divided into smaller groups based on their attributes the analyzing process will become much more efficient and less time-consuming for the thesis author. When analyzing two or more variables and finding out the relationship between them a multiple correlation is used. This can be used in the survey data examination process to find out whether respondents have correlations that could reveal essential information of the customer expectations and whether these relationships and similarities are meaningful for the commissioner. (Kothari, 2004, 122-142.)

The conclusion is followed by the author's own reflection on the research process and assessing the validity of the results deriving from the collected data. The data analyzing

process will be reviewed in order to decide whether the results are in line with the expected outcome and whether they meet with the research objectives and therefore can be used as a guideline for further study contents development, marketing strategy and resource planning from the commissioner's side.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Target market and product development

The targeted market for the specialization program is focused down to local tourism and travel industry entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa, Finland. Tourism as an industry is constantly going through major changes especially in current trends, which demands adaptability combined with structural as well as strategical changes from the industry players. Many of these industry stakeholders might face some uncertainties regarding the future and require further up-to-date knowledge from the field and specially customized educational contents in order to adjust their strategies to endure the forthcoming challenges and improve their business potential. The specialization study program is developed to meet with these requirements and offer the customer the solutions they are seeking for to support their business decisions made on the grounds of the recent occurrences.

Notable factors in the evolvement of the tourism sector and its services are the rise of wireless networking, growing populations, globalization and the faster tempo of life. With growing incomes in certain segments and a greater awareness of foreign branded goods, a scenario is created, where consumers especially in emerging markets have increasing capability to consume tourism and travel services (Singh, 2010, 15). All of these factors pose both challenges as well as opportunities to the travel industry stakeholders and to keep up with the new generation of travelers as well as to meet up with their wants and needs the travel and tourism entrepreneurs must continuously aim towards successful product development. (Annacchino, 2007, 47-48.)

The future looks bright for tourism industry both in Finland as well as globally and it is one of the greatest sources of income for the country of Finland according to the report made by Finnish Ministry of Employment and Economy (TEM). Still a large percentage of the customers using the tourism related services in Finland are domestic, although the amount of foreign travellers has increased during the recent years. This fact is the ground reason why a great future potential lies within providing tourism services for customers travelling to Finland from abroad and it should be highlighted in the marketing decisions made for the years to come.

The tourism services will be employing more and more people during the upcoming years

thus it can't be emphasized enough that for the travel and tourism businesses a key to success is to understand tourism as a very diverse concept that is created with mix of different products and services. In order to assure that the growth continues, professionals from the industry with sufficient educational background will be needed to create and sell the travel and tourism services. This includes also the product development and marketing strategies which both must be conducted efficiently. To make all of this realistic, an increase to the intake in university level study programs is well needed according to the tourism industry researchers. (TEM-raportti, 2014, 8-9.)

Russians used to be a large segment of tourists arriving to Finland due to geographical reasons and the ease of issuing visa for short visits. Some businesses close to border have been highly dependent of the tourism flow from Russia and when the current economic situation in Russia has fluctuated the volume in tourism directed to Finland has decreased, the businesses are struggling. Therefore, it is important look towards new potential customers in the east, especially from China where there is a new growing middle class which is now able to travel for the first time. As before, Finland is mostly marketing itself as a quiet haven of nature and tranquillity. This is expected to be appealing to customers travelling from big metropolitans seeking for authentic Finnish experiences, locality and peaceful break from the big city life. (TEM-raportti, 2014, 12.)

If a business desires to keep up with the ever-changing currents in tourism industry, the product development is a noteworthy competitive advantage. As it is stated in the booklet for tourism product development: "With product development it is possible to not only react to changes in the circumstances but also predict them", (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 4) since building a solid business strategy is made possible only by taking wise decisions already today. The product development should be a wholesome and continuous process as a part of the service development. The process is all about creating the ideas, productizing and encountering the customers. Product development can start from which ever point of the process and it requires continuous scrutiny. (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 4.) When it comes to tourism industry the customer can also be seen actively taking part in the product development since a great deal of tourism services require a lot of interaction and communication between the business and the consumer.

Pricing is one essential part of product development. Pricing tells the customer about the

product simultaneously as it tells about the producer of the product. In certain cases the customer can be part-taking in the pricing process of the product when for example reasonable price for the product is compelled through customer feedback on the experience. In some experimental occasions the customers are first given the product and after the consumption they will be asked to pay only what they think it was worth. The logic behind the pricing can be used to choose the amount of needed customer volume. Selling of the product should of course cover all the expenses of producing the product and have marginal yield but the price of the product should also meet with the equivalent experience derived from consuming the product. (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 28-30.)

When developing tourism services it's crucial to take into consideration how to further improve experiences that have an effect on the customers both mentally and physically. The burning question is how to transform the customer into active producer of tourism experiences instead of being passive consumer of the services. On top of the mental dimension of the customer, their bodies have a great importance in tourism actions. This way of approaching the business-customer relation is extremely important in for example nature and active sports tourism where people are willing to go beyond their personal boundaries for thrilling experiences. (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 11.)

In the center of all of the changes tourism industry is going through, there are lot of core values and things that aren't changing with every trend and these values will remain the same or change very slowly. Knowing this, it is important to recognize all the core factors from the business environment in order to get the needed support for the product development. (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 16.) When engaging fully in product development of tourism services new ways of collaboration between various parties are opened this including the entrepreneur, customer, employees, locals etc. The product is a story, which can be told to all of these parties. (Matkailun tuotekehittäjän käsikirja, 2010, 26.)

3.2 Marketing research

The theory of marketing research is strongly related to the thesis topic, being an essential part of the process since the commissioner is keen on unveiling the survey results in order to use them as a support for the future marketing decisions taken regarding the

specialization program. Currently we are living in an era of informational explosion claims C.N Sontakki, and the information is the cornerstone of making good management decisions. Therefore, it can't be disputed that the quality of the information available will determine the quality of the decisions taken by the management, and this of course includes marketing perspective as well. (Sontakki, 2010, 1.) Effective marketing research requires a marketing plan to start off with. Marketing plan is the document used to guide the marketing activities in a company or for a product itself. The plan establishes objectives and defines how the success is to be measured. On top of that the plan describes all the strategies and tactics used to reach those set objectives. (Pope, 1993, 15.) The marketing plan for the specialization study program will be conducted by the commissioner but it can be complemented by the findings and results originated from the thesis research that is conducted in order to highlight the customer needs and expectations that should be taken into consideration at the planning stage of the program.

In order to make rationally justified decisions, marketing information is needed. Information consists of evaluated data, this data usually being symbols or numbers used to represent phenomena. It is the recorded or perceived fact, opinion or a thought that gives the symbols or numbers their meaning. (Sontakki, 2010, 2.) Marketing information is desperately needed when reaching out for a higher level of knowledge of consumer demand. In the consumer-oriented marketing approach widely applicable among businesses of today, no marketer is able to succeed without sharp knowledge of his customers' needs, preferences, tastes, likes and dislikes as well as actions that might be constantly going through changes. (Sontakki, 2010, 3.)

Consumer-oriented approach in marketing is also feasible for the specialization program studies and therefore the commissioner has decided to get access to marketing information through thesis research process and the survey distributed to the potential customers. Customers' needs and expectations are used to integrate them as a part of the program while customers are also given a chance to be part of the final implementation of the program by communicating the generalized educational needs of the tourism entrepreneurs. This allows consumer-oriented approach to be part of the marketing actions of the study program and takes consumers as active contributors to the contents of the planned implementation of the studies.

Marketing research is establishing itself as a unique function in modern world of

marketing. As an organized activity, research is not searching something that has already being searched. It is a systematic process with an objective taken in order to make sound decisions regarding the marketing of a business. (Sontakki, 2010, 5.) Most commonly set goals for the marketing research are knowing the buyers and the customer response for the decision to be taken. Equally important is to know how to measure promotional impacts and market costs and profits to ensure business steadiness, sage use of resources and avoid taking mindless risks that might undermine the current business economy. (Sontakki 2010, 10.)

3.3 Customer needs analysis

One important aspect in the implementation of the thesis research is to include the theory of the customer needs analysis in order to explain why customer point of view in developing a product is a crucial measure to be taken. By approaching the customer and listening their arising wants and needs when discussing about a service or product, a business can display flexibility by adapting their production to meet up with the customer expectations. In the thesis at hand the customer needs analysis is conducted through the survey distributed to the travel and tourism industry entrepreneurs. The survey questions will be formatted and presented in a way which will ideally reveal the needs, wants and expectations the customers have for the planned specialization study program. From the analyzed survey data findings it is possible to come to conclusions that will in turn yield the needed information of customer needs to be mediated to the commissioner. In addition to having an impact on the contents of the study program, the sample researched are also given the option to receive an invitation to an informational function regarding the program held in April 2016. This only if they wish to provide their contact details in connection with the survey.

The needs analysis can be seen as a process including various activities conducted to identify issues and to determine the most appropriate solution as a response to these problems arising. (McArdle, 1998, 3.) Conducting a needs analysis is a systematic process based on specific techniques to gather information. The process moves up in stages where the findings of the previous stage helps to shape the next one. Conducting a needs analysis is much like a detective work where the researcher needs to follow the leads, check the information available and examine all the alternatives before drawing the final conclusions to provide a solution to the existing problems.

Customer needs analysis cannot be just a one-time event, in order to ensure service excellence and customer satisfaction an analysis process needs to be administered regularly, commonly on intervals of every year or two. (McArdle, 1998, 4.) Although, for the case at hand the survey will be conducted only once before the launching of the study program to give the commissioner a guideline regarding the aspects the customers treat with importance that might not already be accentuated enough in the current plan of implementation. After the implementation of the program the part-takers will most likely be given the chance to submit their feedback which in its entirety will help to develop the program and its contents for the future.

Every business should aim to production that has quality as a core focus. Quality is the extent to which the products or the services provided correspond with the requirements of the end-users. The quality can be measured so that it indicates the current stage of efficiency in the business processes and the quality level of the products that come to existence as a result of the processes. Measures allow businesses to understand to which extent the processes are working, where to make changes if changes for process improvement are needed and last but not least to determine whether the changes taken place have led to any physical improvements. (Hayes, 2008, 1.) Customers' perceptions and attitudes can be used to assess the product quality as well by using customer satisfaction instruments such as customer surveys as a method of measuring the success of business processes. (Hayes, 2008, 4.) Using the voice of the potential customers and their feedback gathered from them as an informational key of mapping the requirements and hopes arising towards the specialization study program, is a way of incorporating the customers as an active part of the study contents planning itself, which is a feature that the commissioner wanted to be included in the thesis research.

3.4 Survey as a research method

The primary data used for the thesis will be inquired from the respondents through a survey. When formatted and polished to an acceptable standard, the survey will be distributed to the local travel and tourism entrepreneurs. After collecting back the surveys from the respondents the data analyzing process can start which will eventually lead to conclusion drawing. Making headway to conclusions based on the data findings, it is possible to provide the commissioner with information of the customer s' needs that should be taken into consideration when planning the structure for the study contents and

to make suggestions regarding where they should direct their marketing resources based on the data gathered during the research process. The most logical data acquirement tool chosen to complete the whole research process described above when assessing the purpose and objectives of research is a customer survey.

The self-administered questionnaire is the most commonly used statistical survey, claims Phillips, Phillips & Aaron. This type of survey consists of a series of questions which the individual respondents will complete independently. Surveys are considered as a statistical approach of collecting data since they are usually analyzed with statistical methods. The surveys most commonly collect both qualitative and quantitative data. (Phillips, Phillips, Aaron, 2013, 1.) When conducting a survey research, the researcher will select sample of respondents from a population and hand forward a standardized questionnaire.

The two approaches used for the survey are quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative means that the survey proceeds through variables and is designed to produce numerical data. A plus side on using the quantitative data method is the breadth and flexibility of the approach. A quantitative survey can be used in various different contexts and it can be easily adapted which makes it convenient in investigating a wide variety of research problems. (Punch, 2003, 5.) The thesis survey will in most parts be using the approach of quantitative data collection methods by pre-determining the answer options available for the respondents thus simplifying the data analysing process by providing the sample with feasible alternatives.

In qualitative research on the other hand the researcher aims to grasp an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that lie behind it. Sampling method in qualitative research is usually not random, but selective with a purpose. Researcher has bigger role in qualitative research and this should also reflect in the process. (Glenn, 2010, 95-96.) The quantitative answer alternatives have been minimized in survey used for the thesis. Although, the respondents will be given an open text field after most of the questions which allows them to explain their own point of view and whether they have something to add that hasn't been brought up in the question itself. The data analysis between qualitative and quantitative is also different, where quantitative data can be easily turn into numbers and statistics, qualitative data needs more attention from the researcher when the gathered concepts and personal views need to be transformed into research

results by using researcher's observer's impression. This means that the researcher observes the data reporting their impressions while these impressions can be used as the final conclusions of the data. (Glenn, 2010, 98.)

To obtain accurate information and minimize confusion and frustration the researcher must be practical. (Balch, 2010, 23.) A good thumb rule for conducting the online survey is to keep it short enough. The response rate will also grow immensely when the survey-designer has an eye for the proper length. Only questions with purpose are asked to avoid pointless fillers. Instructional clarity is the key to proper interaction with the survey sample. (Balch, 2010, 38.) The structure of the survey is very important and it must be clear enough, giving the respondent one question at a time to avoid misinterpretations and confusion. Rating scales are made consistent and they must provide the respondent enough options to choose from. Open-ended questions are used to complement the rating scales since they are excellent for finding out more about respondents' personal thoughts and opinions regarding the matter.

The questions shouldn't be biased or leading in a way that may direct the respondents to lean towards the option the survey conductor might want them to. Clear and simple options such as YES/NO can and should be used whenever applicable, to simplify the process for the survey-taker. The responses should be as specific as possible and as a survey designer one should avoid questions where respondents make assumptions that have less informational value for the research. A cover letter is usually required to accompany the survey. Style of the cover letter should be pleasant in order to attract and maintain respondent's interest. (Krishnaswamy, 2010, 120.) In the cover letter usually the sponsor's or in this case the commissioner's name is revealed although, this might not be done if such information will bias the results. (Krishnaswamy, 2010, 119.) The cover letter, including all the necessary information of the thesis project and a short chapter of description iterating the study program is sent to the sample attached with the survey link welcoming the sample to take part in the survey.

Timing is important. Contacting the target sample when they're not busy is the best way of getting responses that have been answered with thought. For the online survey planned to conduct, the respondents will be given a specific deadline for the survey submission, which will allow them with enough time to fill up the survey when they aren't occupied with other tasks. This also helps the thesis author to schedule the stages of the project

better when the due date for collecting back the survey answers is pre-determined. Ethical considerations are also part of the survey research. This includes confidentiality and anonymity, respecting people's privacy whereas they also have the right to know where the responses they provide will be used. (Punch, 2010, 36.)

When the primary data collected through the survey is once again in the hands of the author the data analysis process is ready to start. In the data analysis stage of the process the qualitative and quantitative variables will be analyzed as the innermost purpose of the analysis and interpretation phase is to transform the collected, organized and displayed data into credible evidence in the form of a table, bar chart, line graph, or other representation. (Cramer, 2003, 6.) The theoretical base must also be included in the result analyzing process. Theory is linked to the analysis in order to ensure that the analyzing methods are efficient and generating only the needed information. The theory will give guidelines how to proceed through the analyzing process all the way into making solid conclusion from the data received.

Analysis will help to answer questions such as whether the study conducted has made any difference and how is this difference visible. This process will include the steps of organizing, describing and interpreting the data collected. (Cramer, 2003, 8.) With quantitative data, statistical analysis is able to measure the change that has taken place and assess the consistency of the gathered data whereas with the qualitative data similar interpretation is more difficult. With qualitative data it is important to group up similar responses into categories and identify common patterns that link them, this approach being called clustering which seeks to organize data into homogenous classes. (Govaert, 2009, 13.) The data will eventually be made into visual evidence and statistics explaining the importance of each question accompanied by verbal summary. The verbal interpretation is more important with the open-ended questions that are harder or sometimes even impossible to analyze with numbers and statistics.

4 SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

The survey was finalized and sent to approximately 150+ Pirkanmaa region travel and tourism entrepreneurs. The set goal was to ideally reach around 50 respondents. The respondents were given a good two week period of time to complete the survey which was distributed through a viral channel, primarily e-mail. The survey was designed through an online survey platform called the Survey Monkey. By using this online application it was possible to create an interactive survey link that could be attached to the cover letter sent to the possible respondents via e-mail. The survey consisted of 14 questions combining both pre-determined answer alternatives and open text fields collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Usually after every question a text field was added in case the respondent had something to add or comment regarding the question. After closing the link for the data analysis process, the final number of respondents totaled in 34 completed surveys which of 5 were anonymous.

4.1 Respondent's name

Question 1 was merely designed to inquire the respondent's name. 29 out of 34 gave an answer to the first question. 5 respondents chose to complete the survey anonymously. The personal information of the respondents was inquired but it was assured that the completed surveys will be handled without publishing the personal information gained from the respondents to a third party for obvious ethical reasons and confidentiality.

4.2 Respondent's organization

The second question was included to find out the name of company the respondent is currently working in. 30 out of 34 respondents gave an answer to this question while 4 decided to skip it. The list of the completed answers included organizations of various types from the tourism and travel industry sector such as hotels, hostels, B&B's, amusement parks and nature travel service providers.

4.3 Respondent's position in the organization

The third question was a query of the respondent's working position in the named company. Altogether 28 out of 34 respondents chose to answer to this question. A vast majority and a total of 17 respondents out of 34 were either the entrepreneur him-/herself

in charge of the business or the spouse of the person in charge. Other positions mentioned were customer service manager, human resources manager, restaurant manager, research specialist and cultural manager.

4.4 Industry

The industry within the travel and tourism sector was inquired in the question number 4. The respondent were given 9 predefined options to choose from including an option “other” whether none of the options named above were correct. 31 respondents out of 34 gave an answer to this question regarding the industry their companies are currently operating. The three most favored categories were: Accommodation services, activity programs and “other”. These three all counted together formed over 65% of the total number of responses. The 4th largest sector was hospitality services with 12.9 %. Transportation and vehicle-related services received both 0% support.

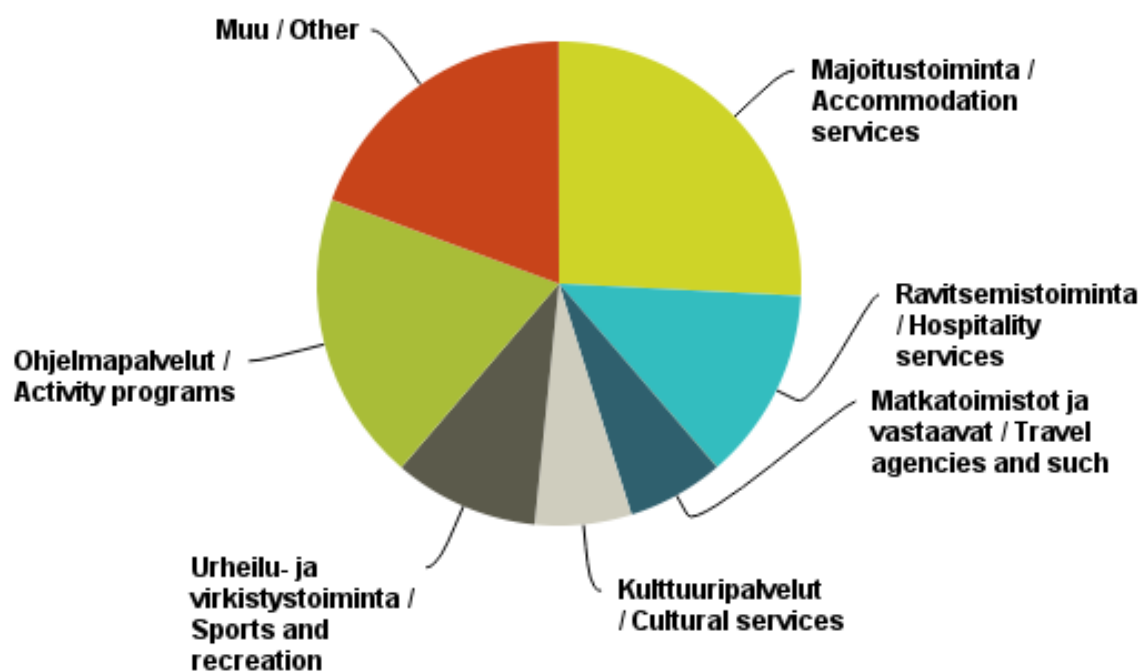


FIGURE 2.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Majoitustoiminta / Accommodation services | 25.8% | 8 |
| Ravitsemistoiminta / Hospitality services | 12.9% | 4 |
| Henkilöliikenteen tukitoiminta / Supporting transportational activities | 0.0% | 0 |
| Liikennevälineiden ym. vuokraus / Vehicle renting | 0.0% | 0 |
| Matkatoimistot ja vastaavat / Travel agencies and such | 6.5% | 2 |
| Kulttuuripalvelut / Cultural services | 6.5% | 2 |
| Urheilu- ja virkistystoiminta / Sports and recreation | 9.7% | 3 |
| Ohjelmalvelut / Activity programs | 19.4% | 6 |
| Muu / Other | 19.4% | 6 |
| Total | | 31 |

FIGURE 3.

4.5 Educational background

In the fifth question the educational background of the respondents was inquired. 31 out of 34 respondents gave their answer to this question where the alternatives were narrowed to 3 categories; basic level, secondary level and higher level of education meaning university level education and equivalent. The majority of respondents ticked the higher level option with 48.4% of the total answer rate. The second most popular alternative was secondary level with 45.2%. Only two respondents, an equal to 6.5% claimed to have a basic level education. The educational background of the tourism industry entrepreneur can be seen as a very important factor determining the service quality to an extent. The tourism degree programs are all under the Finnish law and regulations and aim to produce professionals with wide know-how from the industry. Also the customer service aspects are emphasized in the degree programs further accentuating attributes such as understanding the customer, courtesy, friendliness, punctuality and righteousness that all add up to the overall experience. (Komppula & Boxberg, 2002, 143.) Professionalism through education is also detected in the linguistic skills which enhances the customer experience. Following the taught safety policies and regulations that are a mandatory part of the degree will bring a sensation of security to the customer.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Perusaste / Basic level | 6.5% | 2 |
| Toinen aste / Secondary level | 45.2% | 14 |
| Korkea aste / University level | 48.4% | 15 |
| Total | | 31 |

FIGURE 4.

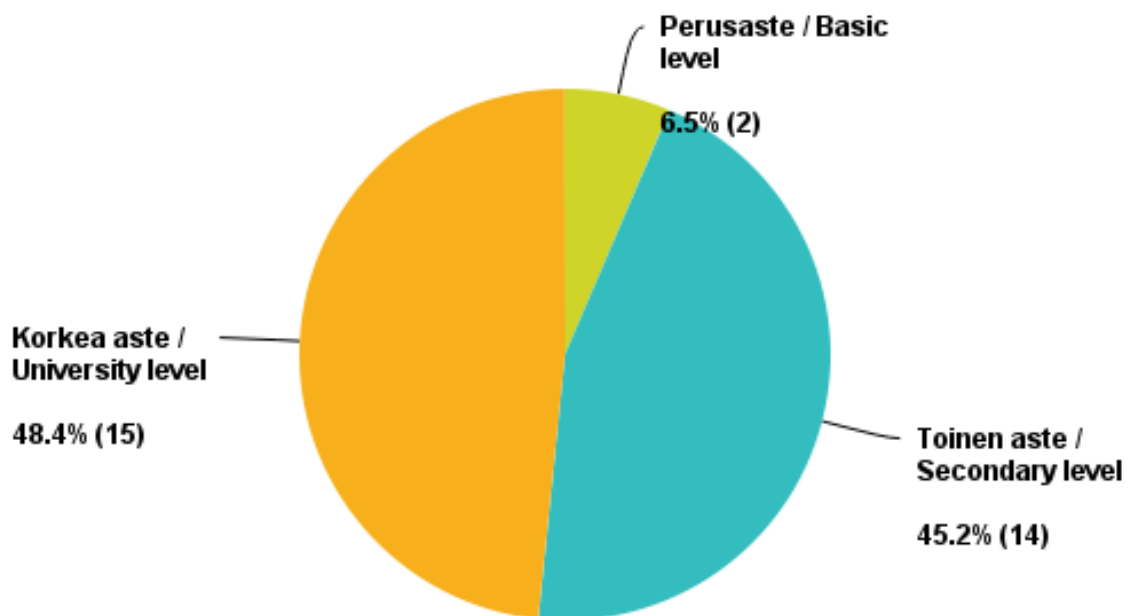


FIGURE 5.

4.6 Future changes and challenges

In question number six the respondents were given 10 different options or concepts related to the challenges and possible future scenarios which the tourism and travel industry part-takers might face during the years to come. The respondents were asked to choose 3 personally most important ones.

In total, 32 of the 34 survey-takers gave an answer to this question. In addition to the 10 pre-designed questions an open text field was added at the end in case some challenges or future changes the particular organizations are expecting were not listed above.

The trio of the most popular alternatives when it came to future challenges and changes for the entrepreneurs were economy (22 out of 32 named), product development (15/32) and marketing (15/32) then followed by competence and technology/virtual tourism both receiving 12 votes. The options respondent's regarded as least important were changing demographic groups (1/32) and globalization (2/32). In the open text field respondents were able to create their own options. Issues such as workforce policies, expansion of the public sector economy, customer behavior, excessive savings and absurd modes of operation within the organizations were addressed.

Tourism industry is all about the constantly evolving trends, claims Knowles, Diamantis & El-Mourhabi. The issue for tourism and hospitality sectors is to find a way to effectively compete with all the evermore exotic newcomers. (Knowles, Diamantis & El-Mourhabi, 2004, 7.) As people become more conscious about the environment and climate change the tourism organizations must seek to attain the balance between costs and benefits of making their business greener while still considering the economic impacts. (Knowles, Diamantis & El-Mourhabi, 2004, 147.) The changing demographic groups may also signal to the future generations that might obtain different conceptions thus patterns of consumption that will show as shifts in supply and demand which will be very much influenced by the capital assets given to the generations to come. (Knowles, Diamantis, El-Mourhabi, 2004, 142.) Technology is said to become one of the most competitive methods hospitality and especially the accommodation service providers employ to ensure steady growth. These kinds of investments are in general large and afterwards will form the core technology of the daily business actions, requiring monitoring and further development to remain its competitiveness. (Knowles, Diamantis, El-Mourhabi, 2004, 165.)

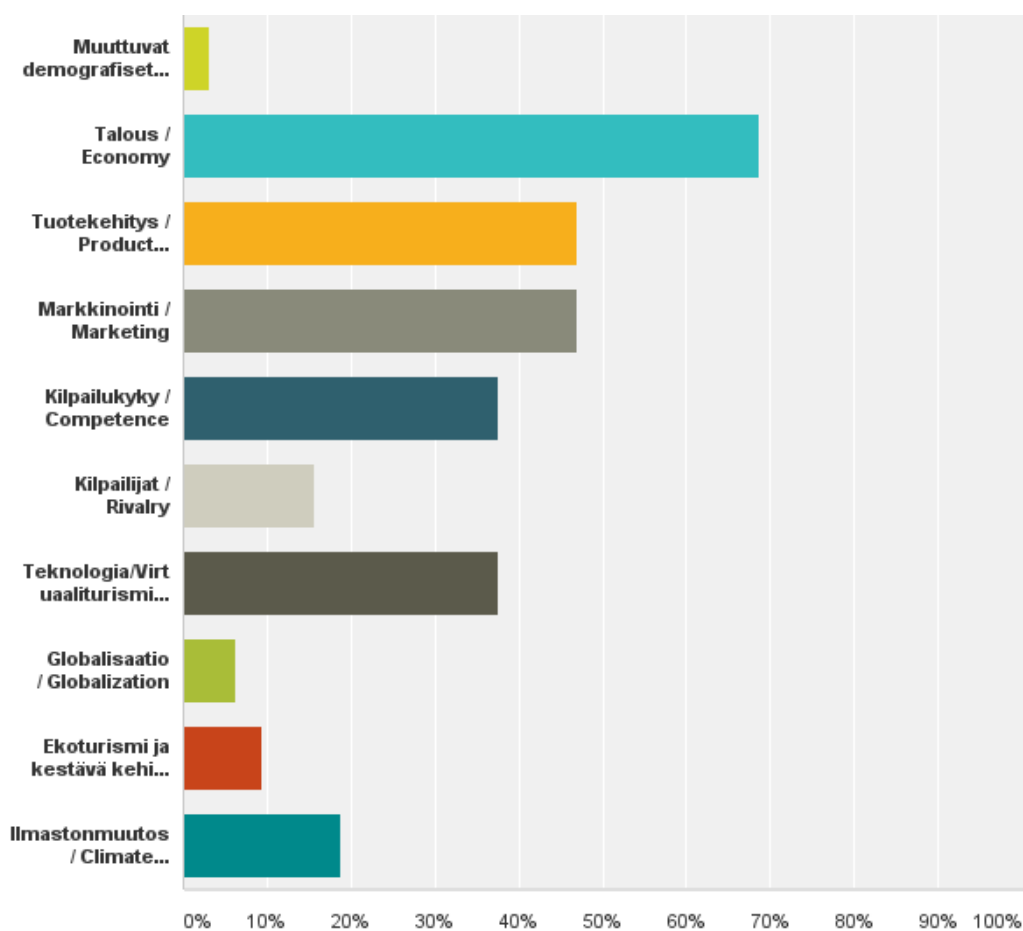


FIGURE 6.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--|-----------|----|
| Muuttuvat demografiset ryhmät / Changing demographic groups | 3.13% | 1 |
| Talous / Economy | 68.75% | 22 |
| Tuotekehitys / Product development | 46.88% | 15 |
| Markkinointi / Marketing | 46.88% | 15 |
| Kilpailukyky / Competence | 37.50% | 12 |
| Kilpailijat / Rivalry | 15.63% | 5 |
| Teknologia/Virtuaalitourismi / Technology/Virtual tourism | 37.50% | 12 |
| Globalisaatio / Globalization | 6.25% | 2 |
| Ekoturismi ja kestävä kehitys / Ecotourism and sustainable development | 9.38% | 3 |
| Ilmastonmuutos / Climate change | 18.75% | 6 |
| Total Respondents: 32 | | |

FIGURE 7.

4.7 Preparedness in future changes and challenges

In question number 7 the respondents were asked to choose the most compatible option when it comes down to how they have been prepared to the future changes and whether changes are anticipated. Altogether 27 out of the total of 34 respondents gave their answers the most common alternatives chosen being investments (29.6%), market breakthroughs (25.9%) and that the company has not prepared for changes or is not expecting any to influence their business in the future (22.2%). In the open text field provided at the end of the question respondents mentioned that they have prepared to the forthcoming changes with educational solutions, developing new operational methods, lobbying, grounding cooperation with local associations and entrepreneurs, finding new collaboration partners for sales and marketing as well as keeping up with the current trends and developing the services according to changes in circumstances. Respondents have also considered new marketing channels and taking part in city marketing and local event planning. Also, when it comes to running an accommodation-related business joining web-based accommodation listing sites such as Booking.com and Airbnb was referred to.

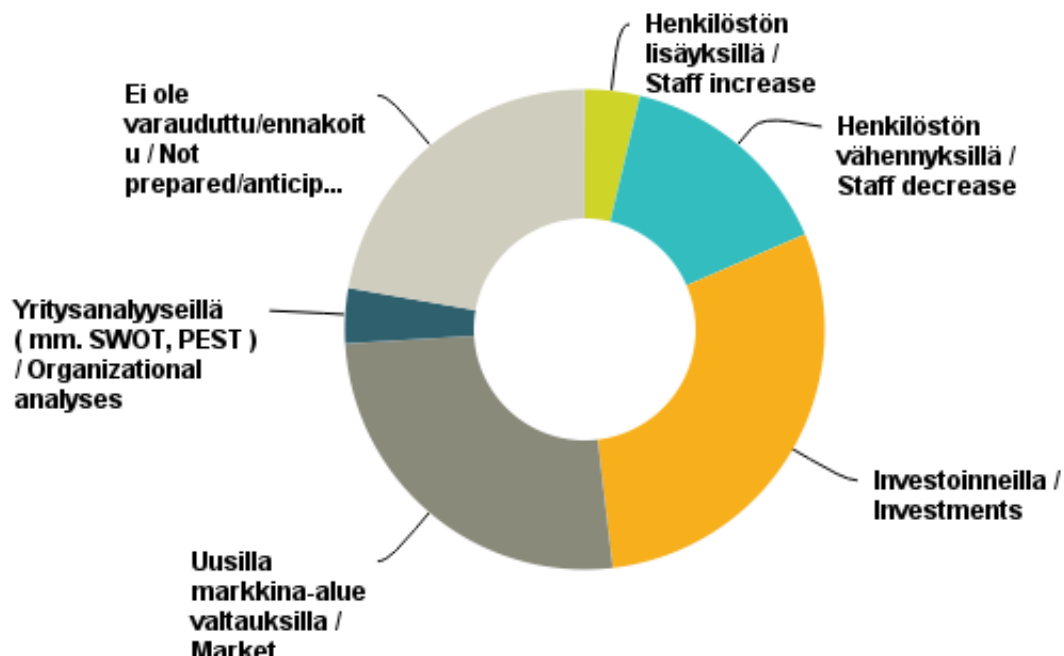


FIGURE 8.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Henkilöstön lisäyksillä / Staff increase | 3.7% | 1 |
| Henkilöstön vähennyksillä / Staff decrease | 14.8% | 4 |
| Investoinneilla / Investments | 29.6% | 8 |
| Uusilla markkina-alue valtauksilla / Market breakthroughs | 25.9% | 7 |
| Yritysanalyyseillä (mm. SWOT, PEST) / Organizational analyses | 3.7% | 1 |
| Ei ole varauduttu/ennakoitu / Not prepared/anticipated | 22.2% | 6 |
| Total | | 27 |

FIGURE 9.

The resources for tourism, both the natural and man-made environments that have turned into attractions are finite. Predicting the life cycle of a product or service is at the same time one of the most important and most difficult thing for a tourism entrepreneur to do. By investing in growth and making attempts to break through in new markets, entrepreneurs can ensure that they have something new to offer to consumers who constantly shift in the currents of ever-changing trends. (Mason, 2008, 264.) The economic situation in Finland being what it is at the moment does not encourage entrepreneurs in staff increases, which was visible in the survey responses as well. Ideally tourism contributes to foreign exchange earnings, government revenues and regional development while generating employment. However, in the times of economic uncertainty the tourism businesses find it hard to thrive and expand. Over-dependence on tourism is also fatal in cases of unexpected scenarios such as for example natural disasters or terrorist attacks that cause tourists to shun certain destinations. (Mason, 2008, 46.) Incidents where the business suffers from over-dependence on seasonality may as well be witnessed in domestic tourism that is very much dependent on the yearly snow fall and have no surrogate for their main product or service.

4.8 Need for updating education

The question number 8 was whether the travel and tourism industry entrepreneurs recognize any need for updating the educational situation within the business to correspond to the current know-how level of the industry.

31 out of 34 answered to this question only 3 respondents leaving it blank. The greatest portion of endorsement went to having a partial need to updating the educational situation with 19 answers equivalent to 61.3% percent of the respondents. 9 respondents (29.0%) communicated no need for educational updates whereas only 3 respondents (9.7%) announced their needs as significant.

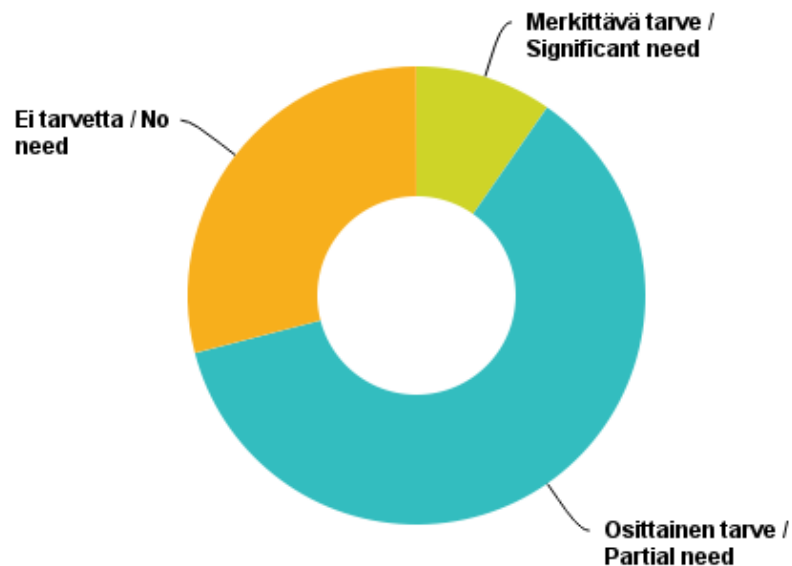


FIGURE 10.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Merkittävä tarve / Significant need | 9.7% | 3 |
| Osittainen tarve / Partial need | 61.3% | 19 |
| Ei tarvetta / No need | 29.0% | 9 |
| Total | | 31 |

FIGURE 11.

Through education the tourism entrepreneur is taught to see tourism as multi-faceted entity that is composed from various dimensions. Understanding the essence of a tourism product is a pre-condition to product development and efficient marketing strategy. (Komppula & Boxberg, 2002, 10.) The tourism product is an experience solely based on the subjective evaluation of the product consumer. As tourism product very often isn't material, customer satisfaction is highly important since there is no way taking returns in for example husky safaris. Entrepreneurs who have already sold the experience will need to compensate dissatisfaction in money. The experience cannot be re-sold to other person and therefore it will be a loss for the entrepreneur. With education and up-to-date information from the industry the service systems can be continuously developed. By understanding the process and the interaction between the business and consumer the productizing is more efficient. Proper education also helps entrepreneurs in evaluating risks and assessing the resources available. Personal sales skills can be practiced by using taught methods. In most cases the success of the product is much dependent on how it's branded for the customer. (Komppula & Boxberg, 2002, 114-115.)

4.9 Needs specification

Question number 9 was formatted into an open text field. The question was a sequel for the previous question asking the respondents whether they had expressed some need to update their current educational situation. In the open text field the respondents were able to disclose their needs for educational support and clarify what kind of support they would like to receive.

The most notable aspects brought up in the comments were the need of support related to; increasing sales and making additional sales, running the economy, making marketing decisions, mutual interest and projects between public and private sector organizations, productizing, product development as well as electronical communication and social media. On top of these issues handful of respondents also replied with needs to improve their language competency and understanding of foreign cultures, specialization, marketing research, coding, accommodation business trends and peer support.

According to experts, in the domestic tourism business the development of brand image of Finland as a destination is still quite unfinished. The weight should be put on attributes such as originality and nature centricity that can be seen as the core strengths of the tourism in Finland. (Borg, Kivi & Partti, 2002, 9.) Marketing and product branding were issues most of the entrepreneurs found troubling. The business must have that special something that makes it stand out and this includes building a business identity. With identity the entrepreneur can approach marketing through various perspectives. The chosen perspective guides the product and service marketing in practice and helps forming competitive strategies. Well conducted, these strategies will correspond to challenges in sales and marketing that were brought up by the survey sample. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen, 2007, 57-58.)

4.10 Concept evaluation

In this part the survey respondents were given 6 tourism-related concepts to give value to. The rating scale was from 1-5 number 1 being “not at all important” whereas the option number 5 stood for “very important”. Altogether 30 respondents out of the total of 34 completed this part of the survey.

The first concept was strengthening international expertise. The vast majority of the respondents (37.5%) rated this as somewhat important the weighted average on the scale of 1-5 being 2.92. In the comment section respondents mentioned that a great tourism potential is coming from abroad and Russians are still a great tourist sector to be taken into consideration when planning the language of the services provided. The goal set for the current alignments in tourism is to build up the international competence and to support the profitability in the industry. Although the domestic tourism is the foundation, the newly established strategy includes seeking growth from foreign markets and it is estimated that the amount of accommodation nights registered for foreigners will increase by 5 % each year. The main target countries for Finnish tourism are Germany, UK, Russia, France, Spain and The Netherlands. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen, 2007, 101.)

The second concept the respondents had to give value to was productizing and marketing experiences. The greatest chunk of votes went to this concept considered as “important” with the percentage of 37.5% and weighted average of 3.58. In the comments this aspect

was regarded as crucially important since a product that has not been productized cannot be sold either. The customer-oriented definition of the product or service is regarded as the most important competitive tool where the customer benefit is a competitive advantage for the business as well. The product should be interesting, tempting, diverse, and pleasant while providing the customer with the wanted experience. The pricing for the product should be transparent and visible for the customer, if extra charges are applicable these should be clearly informed. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen, 2007, 220.)

On the third part the concept was tourism industry digitalization. A majority of 34.8% percent of the respondents regarded digitalization as “quite important” while the average was 3.30. Respondents recognized a great potential in the opportunities that the digitalization brings along but still believed in personal and authentic customer service that can only happen through encountering the customer face-to-face. Digitalization in tourism business poses both opportunities as well as threats depending how well the business is prepared to accommodate the growing amount of transactions made virally. Technology will no doubt simplify the ordinary working processes within tourism organizations but investments to up-to-date installations are required.

4th part of this section was the concept of future anticipation. The division of answers in this questions was very flat, 30% going to both “quite important” and “very important”, 15% going to “important” and “somewhat important” whereas only 10% was left for “not at all important” and the weighted average counted as 3.40. Future anticipation was said to ease the process of product development and productizing. Although the tourism in Finland as well as globally is estimated to experience growth in future, it is not applicable in all branches of tourism. While a proportion of businesses will experience growing revenues other might fight for survival. By perceiving the existing market and the internal features of a business by using strategic analyses, future anticipation and accommodating changes are more likely to be agreeable with the business objectives. (Vuoristo, 2002, 172.)

The next and fifth concept was value creation for products and services. Most of the respondents (33.3%) went for giving it value as “important” the second most chosen option being “very important” with a percentage of 29.2%. The average counted from the total response rate ended up as 3.67. The perception of value comes through the customer experience. The core attraction attributes in marketing and branding tourism products and

services in Finland can be authenticity, uniqueness and scarcity which can all be related to the ubiquitous nature theme. The product value itself is composed from various parts as well which all add up to the overall customer experience. On top of the material costs, the product value is in great measure as well as the customer's personal experience gained through consuming the product. (Weaver & Lawton, 2010, 134-135.)

The 6th and the last concept to be given value was earning logic. The greatest number of survey respondents chose to give it a value "very important" with 34.8% while the weighted average amounted in 3.70. The respondents described earning logic as a lifeline for entrepreneurship, since cutting straight to the core, it's all about making business and there is no point in trying to sell a product if the earning logic isn't right for all of the parties involved.

| | Ei lainkaan tärkeä / Not at all important | Jossain määrin tärkeä / Somewhat important | Melko tärkeä / Quite important | Tärkeä / Important | Erittäin tärkeä / Very important | Total | Weighted Average |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------|
| Kansainvälisyys osaamisen vahvistaminen / Strengthening international expertise | 12.5% 3 | 37.5% 9 | 16.7% 4 | 12.5% 3 | 20.8% 5 | 24 | 2.92 |
| Elämysten tuotteistaminen ja markkinointi / Productizing and marketing experiences | 4.2% 1 | 20.8% 5 | 12.5% 3 | 37.5% 9 | 25.0% 6 | 24 | 3.58 |
| Matkailualan digitalisaatio / Tourism industry digitalisation | 4.3% 1 | 17.4% 4 | 34.8% 8 | 30.4% 7 | 13.0% 3 | 23 | 3.30 |
| Tulevaisuuden ennakointi / Future anticipation | 10.0% 2 | 15.0% 3 | 30.0% 6 | 15.0% 3 | 30.0% 6 | 20 | 3.40 |
| Tuotteiden ja palvelujen arvonluonti / Value creation for products and services | 4.2% 1 | 16.7% 4 | 16.7% 4 | 33.3% 8 | 29.2% 7 | 24 | 3.67 |
| Ansaintalogiikka / Earning logic | 4.3% 1 | 13.0% 3 | 26.1% 6 | 21.7% 5 | 34.8% 8 | 23 | 3.70 |

FIGURE 12.

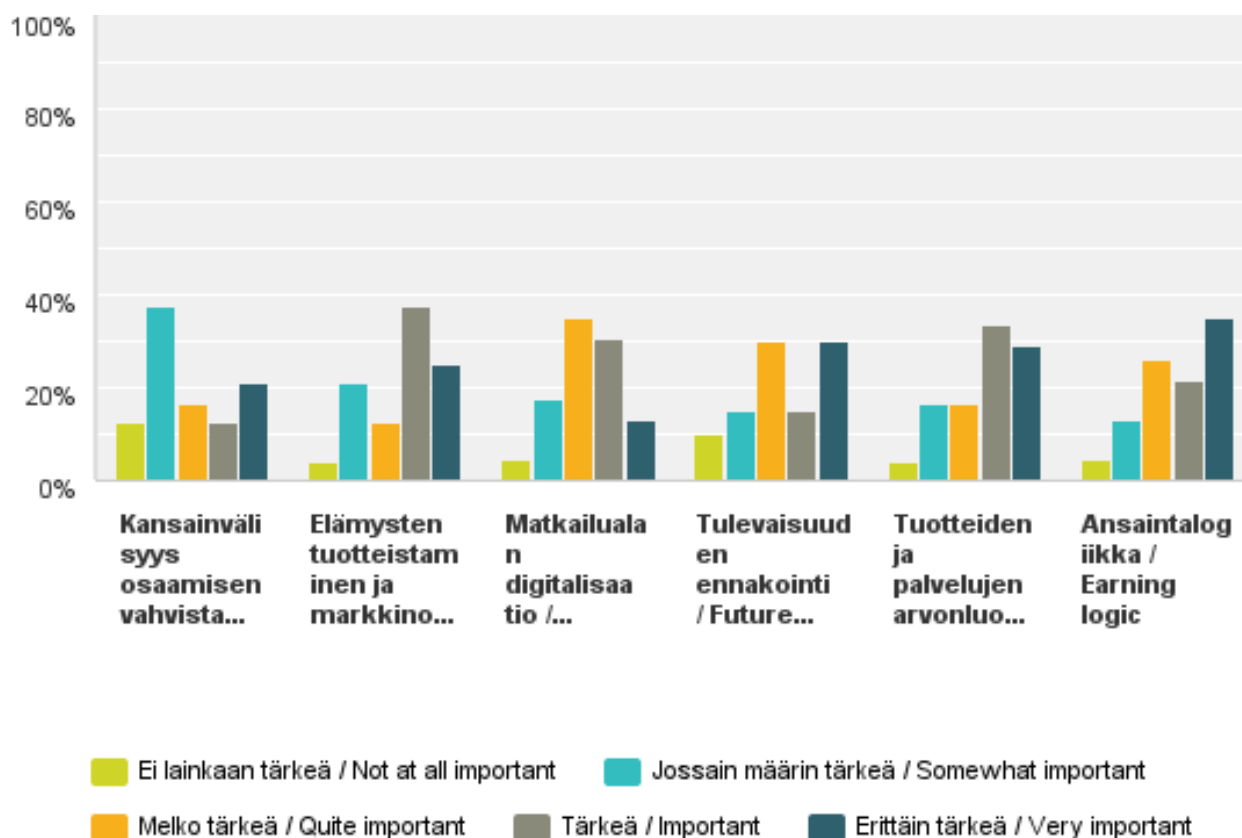


FIGURE 13.

4.11 Price estimation

Next the respondents were inquired their opinion of a reasonable pricing for the planned study entity. 28 out of the 34 respondents gave their opinion while 6 of them skipped to the next question. The pre-designed price alternatives for the planned specialization program for travel and tourism entrepreneurs were under 500 € with the support of 42.9% of the respondents, 500-700 € with 53.6% and over 700 € with 3.6% of the respondents standing behind the last mentioned option. It was also pointed out for the respondents that the length of the study program would be a year and it would be worth of 30 credits so they would be able to estimate the reasonable price for the program realistically.

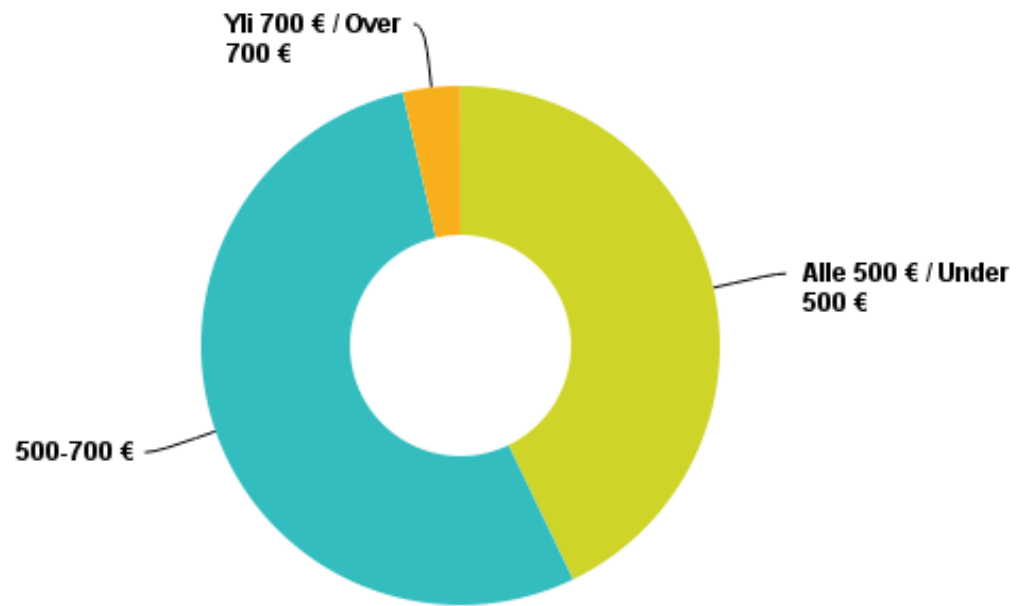


FIGURE 14.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Alle 500 € / Under 500 € | 42.9% | 12 |
| 500-700 € | 53.6% | 15 |
| Yli 700 € / Over 700 € | 3.6% | 1 |
| Total | | 28 |

FIGURE 15.

4.12 Interest in distance learning

The question number 12 was designed to survey an existing interest within the sample towards distance learning that would utilize diverse technological solutions. A total of 28 out of the 34 completed surveys had projected their interest as follows; most of the respondents (39.3%) stated that they are “somewhat interested” in distance learning through technological solutions. In the far ends of the scale 21.4% were very interested and 10.7% showed no interest.

If the respondents chose the option “no interest” they were asked to explain whether there are some problems, barriers or limitations which are possibly preventing them from being

interested. In the open text field followed by the question some of the respondents brought up that in their higher age and years of experience from the field they are not particularly interested in studying anymore and value personal conversations and feedback gained through the customers as their main method of learning and developing their products and services. The informational base can be created from a distance but it cannot replace the need for live encounters.

Technological developments in transportation, mobile communications and other “intelligent environments” have a rapid impact in the nature of travel and communications conducted at a distance. Tourism and technology go hand in hand together and technology can be used strategically in the tourism and hospitality industries. (Hannam & Knox, 2010, 165-166.) As well as providing the tourism services and products to customers through new viral platforms the internal communication within business can be streamlined with solutions that make the process of producing and sharing information between departments easier. Technological solutions are very much involved in today’s educational environments allowing a greater level of flexibility in studies. Presence at the classroom can be replaced by attending video conferences or submitting course tasks through e-learning platforms specially designed for educational purposes. As most of the respondents expressed, an interest towards these solutions exists and they are considered useful and time-saving particularly for busy entrepreneurs trying to combine full-time work and studies on top of it.

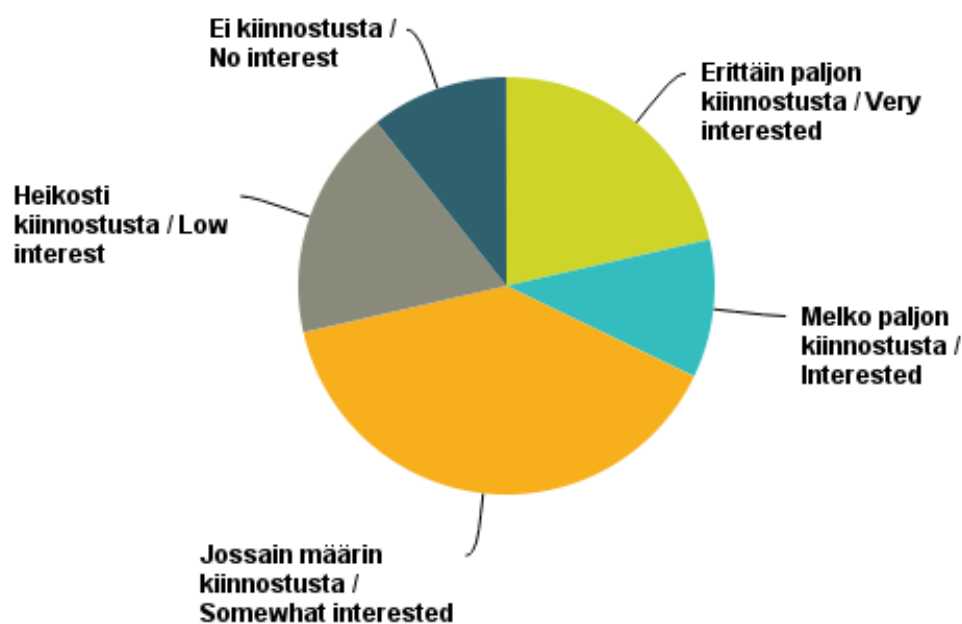


FIGURE 16.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Erittäin paljon kiinnostusta / Very interested | 21.4% | 6 |
| Melko paljon kiinnostusta / Interested | 10.7% | 3 |
| Jossain määrin kiinnostusta / Somewhat interested | 39.3% | 11 |
| Heikosti kiinnostusta / Low interest | 17.9% | 5 |
| Ei kiinnostusta / No interest | 10.7% | 3 |
| Total | | 28 |

FIGURE 17.

4.13 Distance learning potentiality

In the 13th question of the survey the respondents were asked about their acquirements in utilizing the following technological solutions mentioned below.

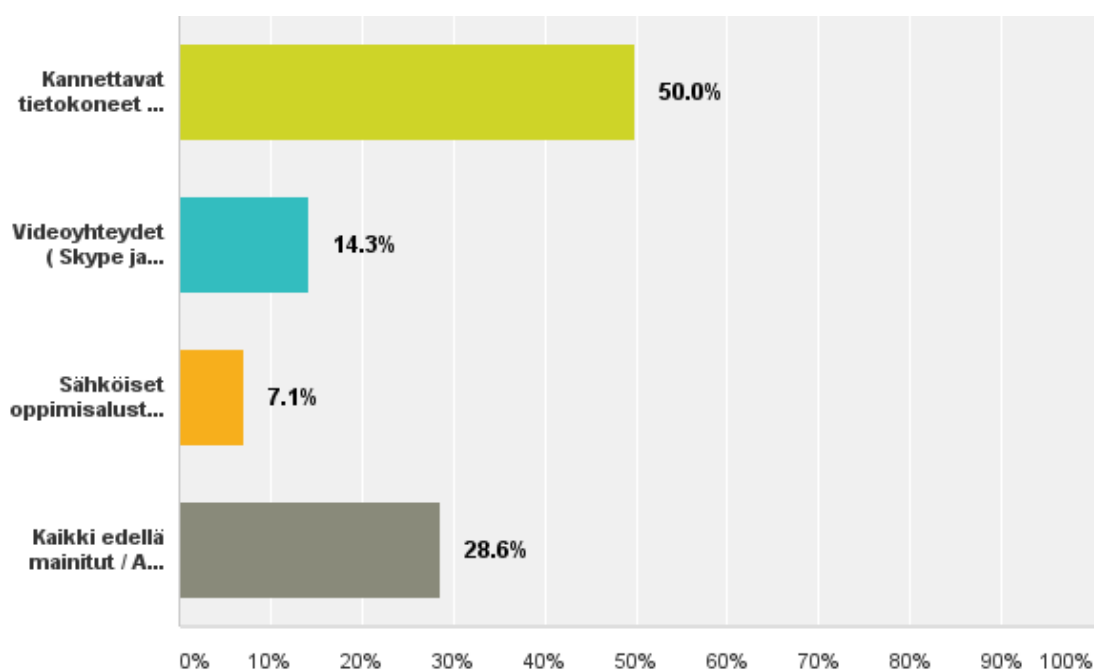


FIGURE 18.

A total of 28 out of the 34 answered the question and in the light of the results it seemed that the laptops and tablets are the most common and convenient technological solution for distance communication. With 14 respondents equivalent to 50% of the total it was the most popular option. Handful of the respondents also admitted the preparedness in using other technological tools such as video connections and e-learning platforms. 8 of the respondents (28.6%) said that they have the possibility to utilize all of the technological solutions listed above.

Judging by the rate of interest arising towards the solutions and the potentiality in making use of them for educational purposes it seems that the entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa have adopted well the most basic and widely used technological settlements that can be used in the implementation of the study program. Acknowledging the technology as a vital part of the business evolution the entrepreneur can both boost the transactions and target larger markets through wider visibility and marketing opportunities online. An immense amount of educational contents published online exist which makes distance studies convenient and rational mode of updating the industry know-how.

| Answer Choices | Responses | |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| Kannettavat tietokoneet ja tabletit / Laptops and tablets | 50.0% | 14 |
| Videoyhteydet (Skype ja vastaavat palvelut) / Video connections | 14.3% | 4 |
| Sähköiset oppimisalustat (Moodle, Optima, Google Docs ja vastaavat palvelut) / E-learning platforms | 7.1% | 2 |
| Kaikki edellä mainitut / All of the above | 28.6% | 8 |
| Total | | 28 |

FIGURE 19.

4.14 Informational function participation

The last question was merely designed to wrap up the survey and as the respondents had their time to ponder over their business and its future while answering the previous questions they were in continuation provided with a chance to express their interest towards the planned specialization program. Should an interest arise the respondents were given a chance to announce their contact detail for further communication regarding the study program.

The respondents were simply asked to choose either YES or NO to the question whether they would like to receive an invitation to the informational event held to promote the prospective specialization study program. Followed by a positive response the respondents were also asked to provide their contact details where the invitation to the event could be sent to.

28 respondents out of the 34 also gave their answers and the division was a very even 50-50 between the people interested and the people who weren't. 11 out of the 14 people who confirmed their interest also left their contact details to the text box below for further information of the study program.



FIGURE 20.

5 CONCLUSION

Now that the data has been collected back from the survey respondents and the survey results have been analyzed, conclusions can be made on the basis of the research findings. An important aspect for the specialization study program conducting direction was to find out whether any hopes or expectations should arise from the sample side, that haven't already been included as a part of the prospective program. Giving a measure of value to the already existing contents by estimating their personal importance to the entrepreneurs was also something that the commissioner was keen on knowing in order to have the possibility to make final adjustments to the study contents before introducing the program.

The survey was sent to travel and tourism industry entrepreneurs from various types of businesses in the Pirkanmaa area. There was no clear pattern of which type of business was presented as prevalent in the completed surveys collected back and it was possible to retain information from a diverse mélange of businesses. As individual groups, accommodation and hospitality services together with activity programs providers were the most represented. Majority of the respondents who took part in the survey were either the entrepreneurs or the spouses of the entrepreneur also in charge of the business actions, which refers to the decision making power affiliated with the educational matters as well. Nearly half of the respondents already had an existing university level degree which is an important factor since the specialization program is projected as a complementing educational entity for previous studies.

The named study contents that the respondents were asked to give a value to included strengthening the international expertise in the travel and tourism industry. The respondents valued international relationships very highly and recognized the growing business potential coming outside of Finland. In order to ensure smoothly operating customer service, also linguistic competence is regarded as a necessary trump obtaining potential customers and to have an advantage within the market that becomes more and more globalized. Although the economic situation in Russia has suffered during the previous years, the tourism product and service providers still consider Russians as the most represented demographic group coming outside the Finnish borders to utilize the tourism related services available. Stronger language skills and understanding of the

cultural norms and differences that might hold a great influence in the customer behavior were acknowledged as issues in which the respondents would willingly be supported.

Marketing is also a troubling subject. When having to make decisions of the possible cuts and savings, marketing is usually the sector within the businesses that has to endure the most pressure. Although respondents regarded marketing as very important, a great deal of them still struggled with their current marketing strategies as well as productizing and were welcoming to external assistance. Product development and productizing are stumbling blocks for quite a few of the entrepreneurs participating the survey. Tourism and travel industry is tricky due to the fact that it is very much influenced by the current and ever so rapidly changing trends. This fast pace of business requires adaptability from the entrepreneurs and preparedness and resources for product development on a continuous basis. Productizing tourism services also requires a lot of creativity and cut-through knowledge of the target market seeking to read their minds and predict the new hot trends.

Technology developments and digitalization of the tourism industry are the factors that the new generation of tourism entrepreneurs can utilize with ease. Listing the accommodation related businesses to sites like Airbnb and Booking.com will bring both marketing visibility and a channel which can be used to obtain feedback and virally shared customer experience. Technological solutions and software are an advantage if used efficiently and provide alleviation by cutting off a great deal of the human workload and decreasing the need for employing flesh and blood -likes to complete the required tasks. Although, the older generation set in its ways may struggle gaining the full potential of the technological appliances due to prejudices and commonly would like to keep the business going like in the good old days dodging the newly discovered modes of operating. The authenticity linked to the original services brings along some appeal to the customer but it's crucially important for entrepreneurs to recognize the need for evolution in order to stay in the ointment. However, while using the technology to intensify the business development respondents noted that one should not still discard the importance of personal and authentic customer service occurring through encountering the customer face to face.

Future anticipation is topical for tourism business for perpetuity. Forecasting the forthcoming changes might bring aid to product development and productizing decisions.

In Finland, where a whopping part of the tourism services are nature-related and dependent on the seasonality, the climate plays an important part in determining the business equilibrium throughout the year. In Lapland most of the businesses make their revenues during the high season in winter in order to endure the times of loss. The businesses in the south that depend on the winter activities and snow, might have hard times coming as well if the winter is poor. All this worries the entrepreneurs for a good reason.

Creating value for the products and services is one of the cornerstones in making business in this particular industry. When the product value is recognized by the consumer it simplifies the process of earning logic and helps the consumers to understand what they are paying for and from which components the price of the product or service consists of. Reasonable pricing techniques can be acquired through a thorough analysis of the rivals, their products and their pricing process. Many of the respondent's regarded both product value creating and earning logic as lifelines for sticking in the tourism business but were still unsure of the process of compiling all the pieces together to amount in the right price pursuing the earning logic. The right price for the product or service should constitute as productive for the producer while being attractive to the consumer and reaching this balance between demand and supply is something the entrepreneurs would clearly require some assistance with.

The respondents also estimated the reasonable price for the specialization study program. Given the fact that the program is worth of 30 credits and lasts a year, most of the respondents felt that 500-700 € is a sound amount they would theoretically be willing to pay. Most of the respondents expressed at least a partial need for educational update and by setting a realistic and affordable price that appeals to the target group might increase the interest in participation drastically. At the very end of the survey when inquiring the possible interest in taking part in the informational functions held in April, a positive 50% response rate of showed interest was detected, which signaled that the people who took the time to complete the survey were actually serious about evaluating their needs of educational updates.

The respondents who are already well involved in the working life might not find the time for the studies as the youth would. The majority of the respondents showed some interest in utilizing technological inventions as a part of study course contemplation. 50% of the

respondents also stated that they own laptops or tablets that can be used as a tools for distance communication. E-learning can be conducted through various viral platforms which for example simplifies the study task and report submissions. On top of laptops and tablets, multiple respondents also indicated their interest towards applying video connections and e-learning platforms as active components in the study projects. Over a quarter of the respondents expressed their potentiality in using all of the technological solution listed. According to the respondents, as a condition for a supplementing study entity for the tourism entrepreneurs, the course should utilize technological solutions only to a certain extent without ignoring the importance of live encountering and discussions.

As a conclusion, the majority of the tourism and travel industry entrepreneurs professed a need for updating their educational know-how. All of the study contents presented for the respondents were valued as important to a substantial extent and a need for assistance in various business actions was referred to. Preparedness for using distance learning tools also exists as long as the possibility of conversations conducted face-to-face still carries out an important proportion of the study ensemble. The future changes the respondents were mostly worried about were shifts in economic situations, as well as issues to do with marketing and product development. To conquer the possible upcoming threats the businesses have been making investments and trying to succeed in breakthroughs within new markets. Over a 1/5 of the respondents still confessed that they have not been prepared for the changes to come or alternatively aren't expecting any. The sample studied can be generalized in the larger target market and in the light of the survey findings a strong potential lies in the entrepreneurs of the Pirkanmaa region if the study contents will be tailored to meet with their current educational needs and the pricing for the program is reasonable.

6 DATA VALIDITY ASSESSMENT

6.1 The validity dimensions

Research outcomes possess no value if the methods used for research are not legitimate. (Jha, 2008, 100.) A successful data collection through a survey is not just a set of questions written down and then handed over to the sample population, claims Mark Litwin. There is a tremendous difference between well conducted surveys compared to the ones that have been done without paying attention to detail. Bad surveys, as one could say, are producing bad data that is unreliable, irreproducible, invalid, waste of resources. Or in the worst case scenario, all of the previously mentioned. On the contrary, professionally conducted surveys yield critical information and provide new ways of approach to the research topic. (Litwin, 1995, 1.) In this chapter that follows the conclusions made from the survey data, the validity of the data will be scrutinized. In order to produce good and valid data, the sample population must be chosen to represent the target market, the data collection methods need to support the purpose of the research and the data analysis and the following conclusions must be carried out with verity and accuracy.

Evaluating of the research outcomes plays an important role in assessing whether the research has succeeded in a way of reaching the set objectives. (Tiu & Crimp, 2000, 8.) Research validity is the extent to which it measures what it is intended to measure. Defining the validity of the data includes developing arguments that are supported by the evidence derived from the results that will validate the meaning and utility of analyzed survey data. (Aryadoust, 2013, 18.) The four dimensions of measuring the validity of the survey data are:

1. Reliability – the extent to which the study findings can be replicated by a different researcher using the same data collection methods
 2. Objectivity – the extent to which results are bias-free
 3. Internal Validity – the research findings map the phenomenon in question
 4. External Validity – the research findings can be used as a generalization to other setting similar than the ones used for the study at hand
- (Kawulich, 2005, 81 paragraphs.)

On top of these dimensions the Dama UK Working Group also suggests that when assessing the validity of data, also aspects such as data completeness, consistency, uniqueness, timeliness and accuracy must be reviewed to examine whether the results and conclusions made from the data findings can be used as valid information for further purposes. (Dama UK Working Group, 2013, 1-17.)

From the researcher's point of view the dimensions of data validity assessment were satisfactorily met. The research study can be easily replicated using the exact same methods by another researcher and therefore the standards for data reliability are fulfilled. Based solely on the research authors personal verification the objectivity thus un-biased results are delivered forward to the commissioner. Since there has not been an impartial person monitoring the research process ensuring the correct data handling, one can only trust the author's own evaluation of the objectivity.

Reaching the internal validity has been succeeded in by gathering data that can be utilized to create information that allows the commissioner to better understand the customer needs and expectations. The information derived from the data findings responds well with the set goals of the thesis research and therefore can be referred as internally valid. When it comes to external validity, the sample population included in the research represents an extensive variety of modes within the tourism and travel industry and thereby can be generalized to typify the target audience located in Pirkanmaa. When evaluating attributes such as completeness, consistency, uniqueness, timeliness and accuracy one can say that these measures have also been met on the standard acceptable for thesis project accomplished with resources and material available and bearing in mind that it is conducted as a work of a bachelor student of International Business.

6.2 The sample

In order to attain quality data the sample cropping is an important pre-preparation before actual distribution of the survey. The target market for the specialization program is addressed to the tourism and travel entrepreneurs in Pirkanmaa region. There was no strict limitation of which tourism business type representing entrepreneurs were approached via survey as the purpose was to obtain a comprehensive shot of the diversity of tourism related services provided in the region and inquire their needs for educational update. The objective for completed surveys to be collected back was set to 50. After finalizing the

questions and the structure, the survey was eventually sent to around 150 potential respondents via e-mail taking into account that e-mail is not considered as a highly personal mode of communication between the survey author and the respondents and might be easily discarded. Therefore, counted if approximately one third of the sample population that received the survey through e-mail would take time and submit their answers, it would be possible to reach the goal of 50 completed surveys.

However, after the 2 weeks of time that the survey link was open, 34 completed surveys were collected back for analyzing. 5 surveys out of the total number of 34 were anonymous respondents who wished not to reveal their names nor the businesses they're currently working in. After consulting the thesis supervisor, these respondents were still included in the data analysis. Though not reaching the previously established number of completed surveys, the surveys which were collected back contained much value and were filled out satisfactorily. Moreover, the sampling of the part-taking entrepreneurs was very extensive covering multiple types of tourism related service providers.

6.3 The survey platform

The actual survey was conducted through viral survey designing application called Survey Monkey. This platform was chosen as the survey creating tool on the basis that the link created would be easy to distribute via e-mail. The question formatting is simply done through a variety of options that can be altered to serve the purpose of the question at hand. The questions were reviewed and the functioning of the survey was tested before distribution. Regardless of the preparations done before the survey launch, some problems occurred. Some of the respondents replied with an e-mail stating that the link was inoperative, although at the same time the other respondents were able to take part in the survey with ease. To make sure, the link was refreshed and sent again to those respondents who communicated the problems to the survey author. By refreshing the link, the previously sent link should have remained in operation just as usual according to the Survey Monkey customer service. This fact was proven true since completed surveys were received after the refreshing of the link. One can still speculate, that if other people also faced problems with the survey link and weren't able to open it, it might have acted as a hurdle for participation in case the sample did not have the time or commitment to communicate their problems forward to the survey author.

Despite extensive thought in the designing stage of the survey, errors most likely will occur in the final survey versions. The most generic errors are typographical mistakes, overlapping response options and vague or misleading instructions. Commonly, the author is so close to the project that the chance of overlooking even the most obvious errors exists. (Litwin, 1995, 60.) An error was detected in question number 13 which was an inquiry of the possibilities to use technological solutions for distance studying. The respondents were provided with 4 ready options including 1. Laptops and tablets 2. Video connections 3. E-learning platform and 4. All of the above mentioned. However, the respondents did not have the chance to choose multiple options what should have been the case in this form of question where it is possible that they have the requirements to use two of the options provided, but not all three in which case they could have chosen the last option that covers all of the mentioned technological solutions. After detecting the fault, the survey was already distributed and in accordance to Survey Monkey, when the link is active only limited modifications can be made. To guide the respondents with the matter an open text field was added at the end of the question allowing them to input text to clarify whether none of the options were applicable. These results were taken into consideration when analyzing the result of the question number 13.

The advantage of using the viral platform for survey design and data analysis was the ease of creating a viral link that was possible to attach to e-mail that was forwarder to the sample. The structure of the survey was clear due to a template that allowed the answer options to be logical. Virally designed e-active link with pre-destined answer options is also saving respondents time and effort when the estimated time of completing the survey was 5-10 minutes and the amount of open-ended questions was cut to minimum. The system counted all the completed surveys and saved the data for further analysis. After closing the link and moving onwards to the analyzing process the system calculated all the percentages and an average derived from the answers and transformed the results into graphics for the survey author to use in accumulating the information to make conclusions. When the answer collection process and the data conversion into numbers and statistic has been performed by a computer, only a minimal chance of an error exist in comparison with same work conducted by a human being.

6.4 The result validity deduction

To conclude, in the light of the validity inspection of the results the outcome can be classified as reliable grounded on the author's personal verdict. According Robert W. Lissitz the validity of a research may be high for one use and low for another. The whole question of validity eventually boils down to the fact whether the research does what we are trying to do with it and how well in the end it corresponds with the purpose set for it. (Lissitz, 2009, 24.) When assessing how well the purpose and the gained research results are in line, the study can be affirmed as successful. The sample population which took part in the survey corresponds well with the set standards. The results originating from the data analysis have been thoroughly analyzed and recorded and the graphics are equivalent to the numeric data. Inferring to the author's personal verification, all of the validity dimensions have been met satisfactorily during the research and data processing measures and thereby the author strongly believes that the research findings can generate valuable information for the head of the study program.

According to Mackintosh, Robert, Bonnet & Marc's view, quality comes into being when having or seeking for self-reflection. The process results in realization of how the identity, ethnicity and class of the author among multiple other attributes might impact the research and being aware of this should call us into examining the data without bias, leaving out our personal contribution of opinions and thoughts. By adopting an attitude of humility it is made possible to realize and accept the limits of our own knowledge and limit of what we can know. (Mackintosh, Robert, Bonnet & Marc, 2007, 369–372.)

By evaluating the analyzed survey data and the conclusions made on the basis of the information originating from the sample population, the commissioner and the management body of the specialization study program are able to review the current study contents and assess how well they meet with the expectations and values given by the respondents of the survey research. The existing study themes were already regarded essential for tourism entrepreneurs by vast majority of the respondents which is a positive observation when deducting the possible interest rate in the program contemplation itself. As figured, most of the respondents expressed a current need for educational update in order to improve their business operations and increase revenues through knowledge of the industry and the customer behavior. The sample population can be well adjusted to represent entrepreneurs of the Pirkanmaa region and that will point out to the

commissioner that a potential interest towards the program can be found from various tourism related organizations around Pirkanmaa, this allowing the commissioner to make the advertising decisions and to allocate the marketing resources taking the customers' point of views into consideration.

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FIGURE 1. Research stages. (Image sources: img.buddy.com)

FIGURES 2-20. Survey questions. Ida Manner. 2016. SurveyMonkey.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey Questions

Background Research for the “Travel Destination of Tomorrow” – Specialization Program

Tutkimuskysymykset / Survey Questions

- 1. Vastaajan nimi / Respondent’s name**
 - 2. Vastaajan yritys / Respondent’s organization**
 - 3. Vastaajan asema yrityksessä / Respondent’s position in the organization**
 - 4. Yrityksen toimiala / Industry**
 - 5. Koulutustaso / Educational background**
-
- 6. Mitä muutoksia tai haasteita näette yrityksenne tulevaisuudessa? Valitse 3 tärkeintä.**
What kinds of future changes and challenges are you expecting? Choose the 3 most important alternatives.
 - ❖ Muuttuvat demografiset ryhmät / Changing demographic groups
 - ❖ Talous / Economy
 - ❖ Tuotekehitys / Product development
 - ❖ Markkinointi / Marketing
 - ❖ Kilpailukyky / Competence
 - ❖ Kilpailijat / Rivalry
 - ❖ Teknologia/Virtuaaliturismi / Technology/ Virtual Tourism
 - ❖ Globalisaatio / Globalization
 - ❖ Ekoturismi ja kestävä kehitys / Ecotourism and sustainable development
 - ❖ Ilmastonmuutos / Climate change

- 7. Miten muutoksiin tai haasteisiin on varauduttu ja miten niitä on pyritty ennakoimaan yrityksessänne? Valitse tärkein.**
How have you prepared yourself for the changes and challenges and have they been anticipated? Choose the most important alternative.

- ❖ Henkilöstön lisäyksillä / Staff increase
- ❖ Henkilöstön vähennyksillä / Staff decrease
- ❖ Investoinneilla / Investments
- ❖ Uusilla markkina-alue valtauksilla / Market breakthroughs
- ❖ Yritysanalyyseillä (mm. SWOT, PEST) / Organizational analyses
- ❖ Ei ole varauduttu/ennakoitu / Not prepared/anticipated

- 8. Millaisena koette yrityksenne tarpeen päivittää henkilöstön koulutusta vastaamaan nykypäivän matkailualan tietotaitotasoa?**
To which extent you feel that you would need educational updates to correspond with the current know-how in tourism industry?

- ❖ Merkittävä tarve / Significant need
- ❖ Osittainen tarve / Partial need
- ❖ Ei tarvetta / No need

- 9. Mikäli vastasitte edelliseen kysymykseen myöntävästi, missä tarpeissa erityisesti toivoisitte tukea ja millaista tuen tulisi olla?**
Whether you gave a positive answer to the previous question, please specify in which needs in particular you wish to be assisted and what kind of assistance you would like to have?

- 10. Arvota seuraavien koulutusohjelmaan suunniteltujen oppisisältöjen tärkeys yrityksessänne asteikolla 1-5:**
Give value to the following study themes according to the importance in your organization on a scale from 1 to 5

1. Not at all important
2. Somewhat important
3. Quite important
4. Important
5. Very important

- ❖ Kansainvälisyys osaamisen vahvistaminen / Strengthening international expertise

- ❖ Elämysten tuotteistaminen ja markkinointi / Productizing and marketing experiences
- ❖ Matkailualan digitalisaatio / Tourism industry digitalization
- ❖ Tulevaisuuden ennakointi / Future anticipation
- ❖ Tuotteiden ja palvelujen arvonluonti / Value creation for products and services
- ❖ Ansaintalogiikka / Earning logic

11. Mielestänne sopiva hinta vuoden kestäväälle, 30 opintopisteen koulutusohjelmalle olisi:

In your opinion, a reasonable price for study entity of 30 credits and a duration of one year would be:

- ❖ Alle 500 € / Under 500 €
- ❖ 500-700 €
- ❖ Yli 700 € / Over 700 €

12. Onko yrityksessänne kiinnostusta teknologisia ratkaisuja hyödyntävään etäopiskeluun?

Are you interested in distance learning through technological solutions?

- ❖ Erittäin paljon kiinnostusta / Very interested
- ❖ Melko paljon kiinnostusta / Interested
- ❖ Jossain määrin kiinnostusta / Somewhat interested
- ❖ Heikosti kiinnostusta / Low interest
- ❖ Ei kiinnostusta / No interest

Mikäli vastasitte "Ei kiinnostusta", miksi? Onko mahdollisia esteitä, ennakkoluuloja tai rajoitteita? / Whether your answer was "No interest", why? Are there any prejudices or barriers?

13. Onko yrityksellänne/henkilöstöllä valmiuksia hyödyntää seuraavia teknologisia ratkaisuja?

Is there a possibility among your staff to utilize the following technological solutions?

- ❖ Kannettavat tietokoneet ja tabletit / Laptops and tablets
- ❖ Videoyhteydet (Skype ja vastaavat palvelut) / Video connections

- ❖ Sähköiset oppimisympäristöt (Moodle, Optima, Google Docs ja vastaavat palvelut) / E-learning platforms
- ❖ Kaikki edellä mainitut / All of the previously mentioned
- ❖ Muu, mikä? / Other, what?

14. Oletteko kiinnostuneita osallistumaan koulutuksesta järjestettävään tiedotustilaisuuteen 7.4.2016 klo 9.00 Tampereella?

Are you interested in part-taking an informational function regarding the study program held 7.4.2016 at 9.00 am in Tampere?

❖ Kyllä / Yes

❖ Ei / No

Mikäli vastasitte "KYLLÄ" ja haluatte, että teille voi lähettää kutsun koulutuksesta järjestettävään tiedotustilaisuuteen, voitte jättää alle yhteystietonne:

Whether you answered "Yes", we kindly ask you to provide your contact details below:

**Suuri kiitos ajastanne ja vastauksistanne!
Thank you! Your time and responses are much appreciated!**